NET NOW

PHOTO SHOPPING

You probably know someone with a digital camera who can shoot your next party, banquet, or reunion, then post the images to a public Web site. Chances are, however, you don't know a professional photographer who can do the same. One company has a solution: **Photozone.com** ***(www.photozone.com)*** combines a local photography referral service with online photo finishing, enabling you and your guests to view and order prints.

Invite a Photozone.com photographer to your event, and a day or two later the company will post proof sheets on its secure Web site. You can view the photos online and purchase prints, as well as give guests a password that will enable them to purchase their own copies.

Although the service primarily targets corporate event planners, the company says it does a fair number of personal events such as weddings. Photozone.com employs a network of 800 photographers across the nation, and has shot events in Canada and Mexico. The service will be available worldwide by year's end.

Each 4x6 print costs $4, and 8x10 prints cost $10. (Print packages and black-and-white photos are also available.) In addition, there's an up-front booking fee of $500 for corporate events; the company says the charge for personal events is negotiable and "significantly less" than the corporate rate. If the photographs are of a nonprofit organization's event, Photozone.com will donate $1 of each photo purchase to that organization.

The company later plans to make digital photos available for download, although pricing was not yet available.

—Kevin Savetz

PRINTING IN PUBLIC, WIRELESSLY

You've probably been on the road some time or another and needed to print a document. But unless you're one of the few to have purchased a portable inkjet, you were out of luck.

Now **Axis Communications** ***(www.axis.com)*** is suggesting a new approach to mobile printing with a technology that takes advantage of wireless networking technologies to allow portable devices to print to a public printer.

Axis plans to debut mobile printing products that use Bluetooth or 802.11 wireless technology (or both) early in 2001, says Patrik Anderson, business development manager. To that end, the company has developed XML-based print drivers for handhelds and cell phones, and a pair of hardware/software add-ons for printers.

Anderson says the software-hardware combo will allow mobile workers to print a document anywhere, whether the printer resides at a hotel, in an airport, at work, or at home. Assuming they have the Axis software installed on their devices, users will be able to print files from a notebook, handheld, or PDA, eliminating the onerous task of scrolling through documents on small screens.

Another possible application for the technology is printing a photo directly from a digital camera. Axis also predicts remote printing will enable itinerant infonauts to use a phone or handheld to identify content on the Net, then print it without having to download or read it first.

—John G. Spooner

Web Around the World

Think Americans are the most wired of all? Guess again. While 66 percent of U.S. citizens have Net access at home or work, the Web surf is up for 74 percent of Swedes. Other findings from an American Express survey of 11,410 people in 10 countries:

- 46 percent have Internet access.
- 28 percent now shop online or will within the year.
- Books, event tickets, and CDs top shopping lists.
- A big brand name is the deciding factor for 81 percent of shoppers.
- 72 percent use the Web to compare, then buy from traditional stores.
- 79 percent worry about security when shopping online.

Source: American Express Global Internet Survey, October 2000

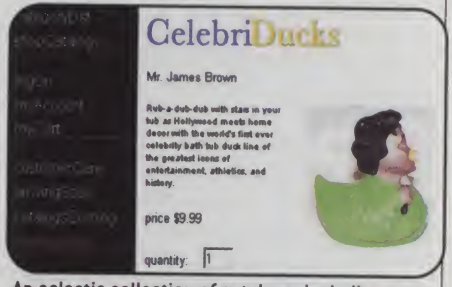
A Virtual Collection Of Catalogs

Buying six items from six online stores usually means entering your address and credit-card number six times—not to mention dealing with the idiosyncrasies of a half dozen different shopping-cart systems.

A new site called **MyOnlyCatalog.com** ***(www.myonlycatalog.com)*** attempts to simplify online shopping by collecting hundreds of product catalogs under one virtual roof. Shoppers can choose items from multiple sellers—a water purifier, beef jerky, and jewelry, for instance—then buy them all in a single order.

The site, which is similar to the more established **CatalogCity.com** ***(www.catalogcity.com)***, opened its doors last year with 120 catalogs, and expects to have 500 online by the time you read this. All catalogs represented at MyOnlyCatalog.com are established mail-order sellers with proven fulfillment records, according to the company. You'll find a few big-name vendors, but the majority of catalogs are the Web storefronts of much smaller retailers, such as Celebriducks (bathtub ducks of celebrities) and Plexi-Craft (transparent computer desks).

MyOnlyCatalog.com is strictly an intermediary between shoppers and sellers—it doesn't warehouse or ship products. When a shopper places an order, the company passes the request to the seller for fulfillment.



An eclectic collection of catalogs, including Celebriducks

Because it does not sell the items directly, the company can serve as an arbitrator between the customer and the merchant if a product does not arrive on time or does not meet expectations. And that means shoppers may feel safer knowing that they have access to a consumer advocate should the transaction go awry.

—K.S.

PHOTO BY STOCK MARKET

ILLUSTRATION BY BEK SHAKIROV

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